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ABSTRACT

This document describes the occupations of librarian and library technician (library assistant). Information on each position is categorized as follows: nature of the work; places of employment; training, qualifications, and advancement; employment outlook; and earnings and working conditions. Addresses of organizations which can provide additional information are included. (JAB)

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Employment Outlook in Library Occupations

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Librarians, Library Technicians and Assistants

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics
1976

Bulletin 1875-49

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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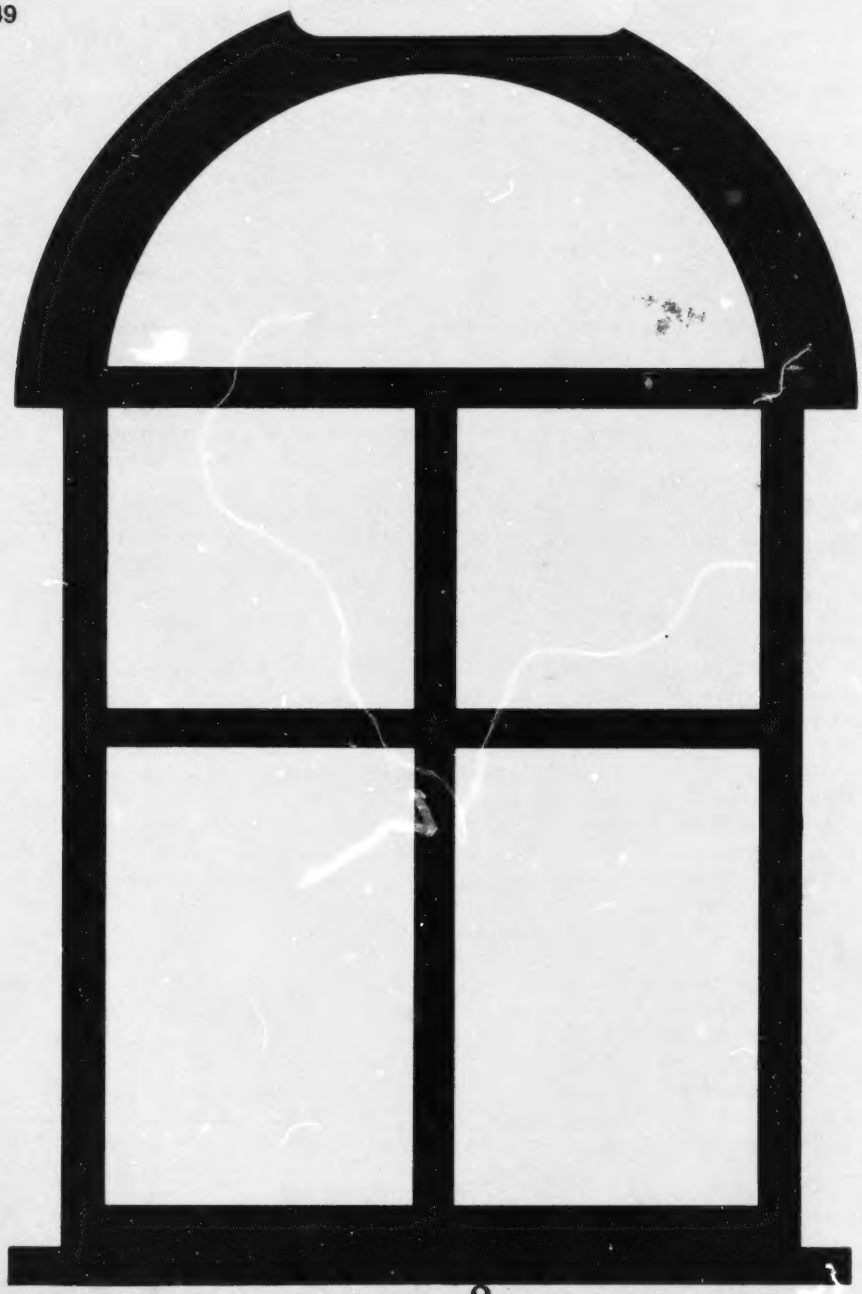

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LIBRARY OCCUPATIONS

People in all walks of life are in the midst of an information explosion. Worlds and ideas are being explored that just a few years ago were beyond imagination, and information is growing at a rapid pace. The main storehouses of information are the Nation's libraries.

Librarians and library technicians and assistants serve library users of all ages and lifestyles. They provide the public with access to books, periodicals, and other printed materials, as well as less conventional forms of information such as microfilms, slides, and computer tapes. The following statements describe their work in more detail.

LIBRARIANS

(D.O.T. 100.118 through .388)

Nature of the Work

Making information available to people is the job of librarians. They select and organize collections of books, pamphlets, manuscripts, periodicals, clippings, and reports, and assist readers in their use. In many libraries, they also provide phonograph records, maps, slides, pictures, tapes, films, paintings, braille and talking books, microfilms, and computer tapes.

User services and technical services are the two principal kinds of library work. Librarians in user services—for example, reference and children's librarians—work directly with the public. Librarians in technical services—for example, catalogers and acquisitions librarians—deal less frequently with the public; they order, classify, catalog, and in other ways prepare the materials for use.

The size of the library determines to a large extent the scope of a librarian's job. In small libraries, the job may include both user and technical services. The librarian may select and organize materials, publicize services, do research, and give reference help to groups and individuals. In large libraries, librarians usually specialize in either user or technical services. They may specialize further in certain areas, such as science, business, the arts, or medicine. Their work may involve reviewing and abstracting published materials and preparing bibliographies in their specialty.

Librarians generally are classified according to the type of library in which they work: public libraries, school media centers, college and university libraries, and special libraries.

Public librarians serve all kinds of people—children, students, research workers, teachers, and others. Increasingly, public librarians are providing special materials and services to culturally and educationally deprived persons, and to persons who because of physical handicaps cannot use conventional print.

The professional staff of a large public library system may include the chief librarian, an assistant chief, and several division heads who plan and coordinate the work of the entire library system. The system also may include librarians who supervise branch libraries and specialists in certain areas of library

work. The duties of some of these specialists are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

Acquisition librarians purchase books and other materials and maintain a well-balanced library that meets the needs and interests of the public. *Catalogers* classify these materials by subject and otherwise describe them to help users find what they are looking for. *Reference librarians* answer specific questions and suggest sources of information that may be useful.

Some librarians work with specific groups of readers. *Children's librarians* serve the special needs of young people by finding books they will enjoy and showing them how to use the library. They may plan and conduct special programs such as story hours or film programs. Their work in serving children often includes working with school and community organizations. *Adult services librarians* suggest materials suited to the needs and interests of adults. They may cooperate in planning and conducting education programs, such as community development, public affairs, creative arts, problems of the aging, and home and family. *Young adult services librarians* help junior and senior high school stu-

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dents select and use books and other materials. They may organize programs of interest to young adults, such as book or film discussions or concerts of recorded popular and classical music. They also may coordinate the library's work with school programs. *Extension or outreach librarians working in bookmobiles* offer library services to people not adequately served by a public library such as those in inner city neighborhoods, migrant camps, rural communities, and institutions, including hospitals and homes for the aged.

School librarians instruct students in the use of the school library and help them choose from the media center's collection of print and nonprint materials items that are related to their interests and to classroom subjects. Working with teachers and supervisors, school librarians familiarize students with the library's resources. They prepare lists of materials on certain subjects and help select materials for school programs. They also select, order, and organize the library's materials. In some schools, they may work with teachers to develop units of study and independent study programs, or they may participate in team teaching. Very large high schools may employ several school librarians, each responsible for a particular function of the library program or for a special subject area.

College and university librarians serve students, faculty members, and research workers in institutions of higher education. They may provide general reference service or may work in a particular subject field, such as law, medicine, economics, or music. Those working on university research projects operate documentation centers that use computers and other modern devices to record, store, and retrieve specialized information. College and university librarians may teach classes in the use of the library.

Special librarians work in libraries maintained by government agencies and by commercial and industrial firms, such as pharmaceutical companies, banks, advertising agencies, and research laboratories. They provide materials and services covering subjects of special interest to the organization. They build and arrange the organization's information resources to suit the needs of the library users. Special librarians assist users and may conduct literature searches, compile bibliographies, and in other ways provide information on a particular subject.

Others called *information science specialists*, like special librarians, work in technical libraries or information centers of commercial and industrial firms, government agencies, and research centers. Although they perform many duties of special librarians, they must possess a more extensive technical and scientific background and a knowledge of new techniques for handling information. Information science specialists abstract complicated information into condensed, readable form, and interpret and analyze data for a highly specialized clientele. Among other duties, they develop classification systems, prepare coding and programming techniques for computerized information storage and retrieval systems, design information networks, and develop microfilm technology.

Information on library technicians and assistants is found in a separate statement in the *Handbook*.

Places of Employment

Of the estimated 125,000 professional librarians employed in 1974, school librarians accounted for nearly one-half; public libraries and colleges and universities each employed about one-fifth. An estimated one-seventh worked in special libraries, including libraries in government agencies. Some librarians worked in correctional institutions, hospitals, and State institutions, while a small number served as consultants, and State and Federal Government administrators and faculty in schools of library science. The Federal Government employed about 3,200 professional librarians.

More than 85 percent of all librarians are women. In college and university libraries, however, men make up about 35 percent of the total professional staff. Men also are relatively numerous in law libraries and in special libraries concerned with science and technology.

Most librarians work in cities and towns. Those attached to bookmobile units serve widely scattered population groups.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

A professional librarian ordinarily must complete a 1-year master's degree program in library science. A Ph. D. degree is an advantage to those who plan a teaching career in library schools or who aspire to a top administrative post, particularly in a college or university library or in a large library system. For those who are interested in the special libraries field, a master's degree or doctorate in the subject of the library's specialization is highly desirable.

In 1974, 53 library schools in the United States were accredited by the American Library Association and offered a master's degree in library science (M.L.S.). In addition, many other colleges offer graduate programs or courses within 4-year undergraduate programs.

Most graduate schools of library science require graduation from an accredited 4-year college or university, a good undergraduate record, and a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language. Some schools also require introductory un-

dergraduate courses in library science. Most prefer a liberal arts background with a major in an area such as the social sciences, the arts, or literature. Some schools require entrance examinations.

Special librarians and information science specialists must have extensive knowledge of their subject matter as well as training in library science. In libraries devoted to scientific information, librarians should be proficient in one foreign language or more. They also must be well informed about computerized methods for storing and retrieving technical information.

Most States require that public school librarians be certified and trained both as teachers and librarians. The specific education and experience necessary for certification vary according to State and the school district. The local superintendent of schools and the State department of education can provide information about specific requirements in an area.

In the Federal Government, beginning positions require completion of a 4-year college course and a master's degree in library science, or demonstration of the equivalent in experience and education by a passing grade on an examination.

Many students attend library schools under cooperative work-study programs that combine the academic program with practical work experience in a library. Scholarships for training in library science are available under certain State and Federal programs and from library schools, as well as from a number of the large libraries and library associations. Loans, assistantships, and financial aid also are available.

Librarians should be intellectually curious and able to express themselves verbally, and should have the desire and ability to help others use library materials.

Experienced librarians may advance to administrative positions or to specialized work. Promotion to these positions, however, is limited primarily to those who have completed graduate training in a library school, or to those who have specialized training.

Employment Outlook

The employment outlook for librarians is expected to be somewhat competitive through the mid-1980's. Although employment in the field is expected to grow over the period, the supply of persons qualified for librarianship is likely to expand as an increasing number of new graduates and labor force reentrants seek jobs as librarians.

The anticipated increase in demand for librarians in the late 1970's and early 1980's will not be nearly as great as it was in the 1960's. Then, school enrollments were rising rapidly and Federal expenditures supported a variety of library programs.

Fewer births during the 1960's will result in a slight decline in elementary and secondary school enrollments through the remainder of the 1970's and early 1980's. The effect of birth rates in the 1960's will begin to be manifested in colleges and universities in the early 1980's, when total degree-credit enrollment is expected to level off. In both the schools and the colleges and universities, as a result, the demand for librarians will increase at a slower pace than in the past.

On the other hand, requirements for public librarians are expected to increase through 1985. The growth of a better educated population will necessitate an increased number of librarians to serve the public. The educationally disadvantaged, handicapped, and various minority groups also will need qualified librarians to provide special services. Also, the expanding use of computers to store and retrieve information will contribute to the increased demand for information specialists and library automation specialists in all types of libraries.

In addition to openings from growth, replacements will be needed each year for librarians who retire, die, transfer to other types of work, or leave the labor force.

Employment opportunities will vary not only by type of library but also by the librarian's educational qualifications and area of specialization. Although the overall employment outlook is competitive, persons who are willing to seek positions in other geographical areas and in different types of libraries will have better opportunities. New graduates having more recent training may have an employment advantage over reentrants, delayed entrants, or transfers to the profession. Their lower beginning salaries, compared to more experienced workers, may also be an employment advantage.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Salaries of librarians vary by type of library, the individual's qualifications, and the size and geographical location of the library.

Starting salaries of graduates of library school master's degree programs accredited by the American Library Association averaged $9,423 a year in 1974, ranging from $8,956 in public libraries to $9,864 in special libraries. The average annual salary for special librarians was $13,900 in 1974. For librarians in college and university libraries, average salaries ranged from $8,700 a year for those with limited experience working in private 4-year colleges to over $13,000 for university librarians with more extensive experience. Salaries for library administrators ranged somewhat higher. Department heads in college libraries earned between $10,000 and $14,000 a year. In general, librarians earned about one and one-half times as much as the average for all nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming.

In the Federal Government, the entrance salary for librarians with a master's degree in library science was $12,841 a year in late 1974. The average salary for all librarians in the Federal Government was $17,013.

The typical workweek for librarians is 5 days, ranging from 35 to 40 hours. The work schedule of public and college librarians may include some weekend and evening work. School librarians generally have the same workday schedule as classroom teachers. A 40-hour week during normal business hours is common for government and other special librarians.

The usual paid vacation after a year's service is 3 to 4 weeks. Vacations may be longer in school libraries, and somewhat shorter in those operated by business and industry. Many librarians are covered by sick leave; life, health, and accident insurance; and pension plans.

Sources of Additional Information

Additional information, particularly on accredited programs and scholarships or loans, may be obtained from:

American Library Association, 50 East Huron St., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

For information on requirements for special librarians, write to:

Special Libraries Association, 235 Park Ave., South, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Information on Federal assistance for library training under the Higher Education Act of 1965 is available from:

Office of Libraries and Learning Resources, Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D.C. 20202.

Those interested in a career in Federal libraries should write to:

Secretariat, Federal Library Committee, Room 310, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

Material on information science specialists may be obtained from:

American Society for Information Science, 1140 Connecticut Ave. NW., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Individual State library agencies can furnish information on scholarships available through their offices, on requirements for certification, and general information about career prospects in their regions. State boards of education can furnish information on certification requirements and job opportunities for school librarians.

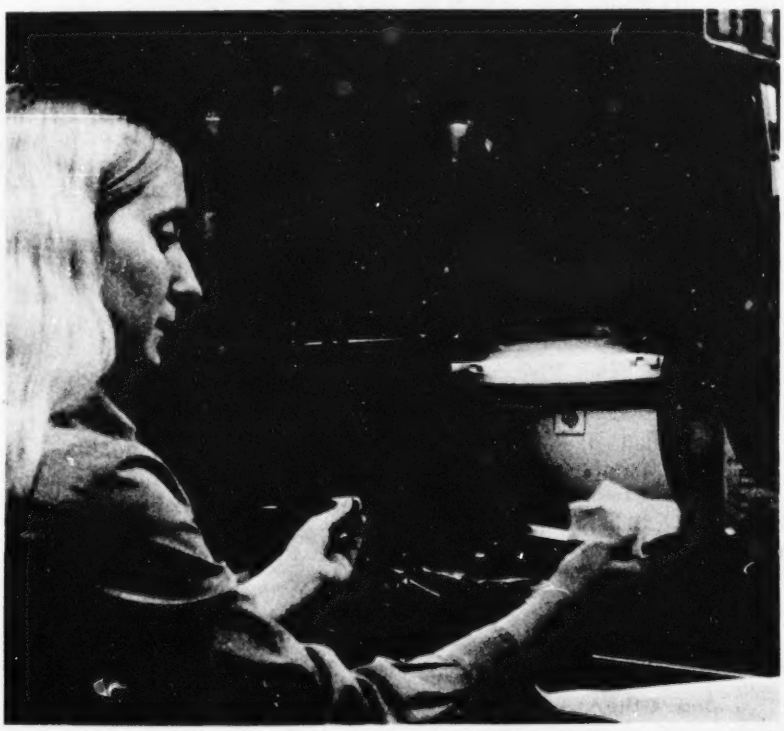
LIBRARY TECHNICIANS AND ASSISTANTS

(D.O.T. 249.368)

Nature of the Work

Library technicians and assistants support and assist professional librarians in providing information. Many work directly with the library users to explain and discuss available services. They are supervised by a librarian and have duties in either technical services or user services.

In technical services, library assistants prepare the library's materials and equipment for readers' use. For example, they may keep current files of special materials, such as newspaper clippings and pictures. They may operate and maintain audiovisual and data processing equipment, including slide projectors and tape recorders, as well as readers that magnify, project on a screen, and sometimes print out information on microfilm and microfiche cards. Library assistants also may perform many of the routine tasks involved in purchasing and processing library materials. The details of cataloging new books and other additions to the library's collection are often an important part of their job.



Library assistant checking film for damage on inspecting machine.

In user's services, library assistants furnish information on library services, facilities, and rules, and answer questions that involve simple factfinding in standard reference sources. They also assist readers in the use of catalogs and indexes to locate books and other materials. Library assistants may check out, reserve, and receive materials that users borrow. In addition, their duties include sorting and shelving, inspection and repair of books and other publications, issuing and checking library cards, issuing notices for overdue books, and related clerical work.

In many libraries, more highly trained personnel known as library technicians perform duties similar to those of assistants, but which require more technical knowledge. However, library technicians do not usually sort or shelve books or handle clerical or related tasks. Some, in addition to their regular duties, may supervise the work of others who perform the more routine work of the library.

Places of Employment

An estimated 135,000 people—four-fifths of them women—worked as library technicians and assistants in 1974. Most worked in large public libraries or in college and university libraries. Smaller numbers worked in school libraries and in medical, law, scientific, technical, and other special libraries.

In 1974, the Federal Government employed about 3,200 library technicians. These people worked chiefly in the Department of Defense and the Library of Congress, although some worked in small Federal libraries throughout the country.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Library technicians and assistants may receive training for their work either on the job or in a formal post-high school program. Depending on the library, on-the-job programs generally require from 1 to 3 years to complete.

Junior or community colleges and technical institutes offer 2-year formal educational programs which lead to an associate of arts degree in library technology. Many people working in libraries take courses part-time to get their degree.

Junior and community college programs generally include 1 year of liberal arts courses and a year of library-related study on purposes and organization of libraries, and on procedures and processes involved in operating a library. Students learn to order and process, catalog, and circulate library materials. Some receive training in data processing as it applies to libraries. Many learn to use and maintain audiovisual materials and equipment.

In 1974, 59 institutions offered library technical assistant training. These institutions—mostly 2-year colleges—are in 23 States. Some programs teach skills for a particular type of library. Therefore, a prospective student should select a program with a knowledge of the curriculum, instructional facilities, faculty qualifications, and the kinds of jobs that graduates have found. Also, while programs may lead to an associate degree, credits earned in a library technology program may not apply toward a professional degree in library science.

A high school diploma or its equivalent is the standard requirment for both academic and on-the-job training programs. Many programs also require typing.

Library technicians and assistants should enjoy detail and have manual dexterity, verbal ability to explain procedures to library users, and numerical ability to handle circulation statistics. Jobs may require much standing, stooping, bending, and reaching.

Employment Outlook

The number of library technicians and assistants is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the mid-1980's. More positions are likely to be available in large public and college and university libraries, particularly for persons who graduate from academic programs.

Factors influencing the demand for library technicians and assistants are population and school and college enrollment growth and expansion of library service. Library technicians and assistants increasingly are performing some of the routine tasks formerly done by the professional staff.

In addition to openings created by growth, many library technicians and assistants will be needed annually to replace those who die, retire, or transfer to other fields.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Salaries for library technicians and assistants vary widely depending on the size of the library or library system in which they work as well as the geographical location and size of the community. However, in general, they averaged about the same as all nonsupervisory workers in private industry, except farming.

In the Federal Government, salaries of library technicians generally ranged from $6,764 to $10,520 a year in 1974. A few earned $12,841 a year, or more.

Library technicians in government and special libraries usually work a regular 40-hour week, but persons in public libraries and college and university libraries may have schedules that include weekend and evening hours. In schools, library assistants work during regular school hours.

Most libraries provide fringe benefits such as group insurance and retirement pay. Additional benefits offered by private busi-

nesses often include educational assistance programs. Library technicians employed by the Federal Government receive the same benefits as other Federal workers.

Sources of Additional Information

For information on institutions offering programs for the training of library technicians, write:

Council of Library Technical Assistants, Department of Library Science, University of Mississippi, University, Miss. 38677.

American Library Association, Office of Library Personnel Resources, 50 East Huron St., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

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